

HON. MARCY KAPTUR
Â OF OHIO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THURSDAY, APRILÂ 6, 2006

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Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise on behalf of both current and retired Delphi workers in my district and around our Nation who are suffering from the financial woes of the largest automotive parts manufacturer in the country. Unfortunately, these Delphi workers are but the latest victims in a series of tragedies for the American worker. What we are currently witnessing, the bankruptcy and subsequent reorganization of Delphi is the fallout from regrettable trade agreements like NAFTA, and CAFTA, and the accompanying influence of some elected officials who are for globalized big business at the expense of the American people, big business built on low wages, no benefits, and no worker safety.

Job loss is also due to major auto firms' leadership and executive boards who failed to make fuel efficient vehicles that Americans and the world want to buy. So our workers suffer.

Delphi's most recent proposal is to lower wages from \$27 an hour to \$22 an hour through 2007, and then to \$16.50 thereafter. This would be a 40 percent cut in middle-class wages.

On Friday, Delphi filed a motion in bankruptcy court asking a judge to void its labor contracts. But how can you ask American workers to compete with a country like Japan which keeps its markets closed, the second largest market in the world? How can you ask our workers to compete with poverty level wages in Mexico and China? And how can you ask our workers to compete when big firms outsource everything to avoid paying workers what they justly deserve?

Late last year, Congressman *George Miller*, ranking member of the Education and Workforce Committee, took the initiative to hold hearings on this subject.

I want to make sure this evening that many of the workers' voices from my district are heard, like Mary Pat Bishoff of Marblehead, who said, ``My husband is 49 and has 32 years in at Delphi. He got sick and has been off since October. With only 5 years left on our first mortgage and 8 years on the second, we had to refinance and take them up to 30 years just to survive. This will force us to pay \$733.11 a month instead of the \$152.11 we were paying. We are faced with a decision as so many others are, should he retire and risk losing his pension? Or, if he stays and they cut pay, that means sick pay will also go down and we will lose our home." What kind of a choice is that?

David Saylor of Port Clinton said, ``I retired from the GM assembly plant at Lordstown, Ohio in December of 1987, with the promise I would have complete health care coverage for life. Well, I will now have to pay \$21 monthly, and that will greatly impact me since I took an early retirement and do not have the full 30-year retirement benefit."

Raymond Stahl of Vermillion, Ohio said, ``They are shutting down the plant I work at and are moving it. Now I am out of a good paying job, and at my age it is going to be hard to even get another job let alone one that pays so well. America comes first, not overseas."

Andrew Briscar, another Ohioan, said, ``I worked very hard for 20 years at the Delphi Packard Electric to get to a point where I can make a comfortable living for myself and my son. Now Delphi Packard Electric wants to cut my pay and benefits to a level that a young man or woman might make just coming out of high school."

Mr. Speaker, workers who dedicate years of service to a company should be able to count on a decent retirement and measure of economic security. This Congress must step up with meaningful pension reform to help secure pensions and encourage companies to continue providing them.

The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation should have been reinfused with funds long ago with its \$23 billion deficit, and we ought to be renegotiating trade agreements like NAFTA and CAFTA that continue to cash out good American jobs. Opponents said these jobs would go south, and they surely have, with GM now being Mexico's being largest employer. And it is no surprise that companies like Delphi, GM's biggest supplier, are following them.

I have spoken with Delphi management, and our delegation is doing everything possible to keep these Delphi jobs in America, but we need a majority of Members here dedicated to that purpose. I have invited Chairman Steve Miller of Delphi to tour the Sandusky Delphi facility and to meet with key employees and public officials, and he has yet to take me up on that offer.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the Members to sign on to the Balancing Trade Act of 2005 which I have introduced to ask our trade ambassador to come back to us with recommendations to write all of these trade deficits that we are incurring with other trading countries around the world. America simply must put ourselves back in a positive trade balance status.